

Amendment V Lower Age Requirement for Members of the State Legislature

1 **Amendment V proposes amending the Colorado Constitution to:**

- 2 ♦ lower the age requirement for serving in the state legislature from 25 to 21.

3 **Summary and Analysis**

4 ***Requirements for serving in the state legislature.*** The state constitution requires
5 that a representative or senator in the state legislature be at least 25 years old, be a
6 United States citizen, and reside in the district from which he or she is elected for at least
7 12 months prior to being elected. Amendment V lowers the minimum age requirement
8 to 21. The existing age requirement has been in the state constitution since its adoption
9 in 1876.

10 ***Comparison of state age requirements.*** Every state, with the exception of
11 Vermont, has minimum age requirements ranging from 18 to 30 years old for members
12 of the state legislature. In Colorado, an individual must be at least 25 years old to
13 become a state representative or state senator. Forty-three states set the minimum age
14 requirement for state representatives at either 18 or 21. For state senators, about half of
15 the states set the minimum age requirement between 25 and 30, and the other half set it
16 at either age 18 or 21.

*For information on those issue committees that support or oppose the measures on the ballot at the **November 6, 2018**, election, go to the Colorado Secretary of State's elections center web site hyperlink for ballot and initiative information:*

<http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/Initiatives/InitiativesHome.html>

17 **Arguments For**

- 18 1) Excluding 21- to 24-year-olds from seeking election to the state legislature is an
19 unnecessary restriction. A 21-year-old is considered an adult under the law.
20 Voters can judge whether a candidate possesses the maturity, ability, and
21 competence to hold political office. In addition, allowing younger candidates to
22 run for office encourages the civic engagement of young people.

23 **Arguments Against**

- 24 1) The current age requirement strikes an appropriate balance between youth and
25 experience. Younger candidates may lack the maturity and expertise to be
26 effective legislators. The policy decisions and political pressures that legislators
27 face are best handled by people with more life experience. Lack of experience

1 could hinder a young legislator's ability to represent his or her constituents
2 effectively.

3 **Estimate of Fiscal Impact**

4 This measure has no impact on state or local government revenue or spending.